

§ 115.15 Underwriting and servicing standards.

(a) *Underwriting.* (1) Sureties must evaluate the credit, capacity, and character of a Principal using standards generally accepted by the surety industry and in accordance with SBA's Standard Operating Procedures on underwriting and the Surety's principles and practices on unguaranteed bonds. The Principal must satisfy the eligibility requirements set forth in § 115.13. The Surety must reasonably expect that the Principal will successfully perform the Contract to be bonded.

(2) The terms and conditions of the bond and the Contract must be reasonable in light of the risks involved and the extent of the Surety's participation. The bond must satisfy the eligibility requirements set forth in § 115.12(b). The Surety must be satisfied as to the reasonableness of cost and the feasibility of successful completion of the Contract.

(b) *Servicing.* The Surety must ensure that the Principal remains viable and eligible for SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program, must monitor the Principal's progress on bonded Contracts guaranteed by SBA, and must request job status reports from Obligees of Final Bonds guaranteed by SBA. Documentation of the job status requests must be maintained by the Surety.

§ 115.16 Determination of Surety's Loss.

Loss is determined as follows:

(a) *Loss under a Bid Bond* is the lesser of the penal sum or the amount which is the difference between the bonded bid and the next higher responsive bid. In either case, the Loss is reduced by any amounts the Surety recovers by reason of the Principal's defenses against the Obligees' demand for performance by the Principal and any sums the Surety recovers from indemnitors and other salvage.

(b) *Loss under a Payment Bond* is, at the Surety's option, the sum necessary to pay all just and timely claims against the Principal for the value of labor, materials, equipment and supplies furnished for use in the performance of the bonded Contract and other covered debts, or the penal sum of the Payment Bond. In either case, the Loss

includes interest (if any), but Loss is reduced by any amounts recovered (through offset or otherwise) by reason of the Principal's claims against laborers, materialmen, subcontractors, suppliers, or other rightful claimants, and by any amounts recovered from indemnitors and other salvage.

(c) *Loss under a Performance Bond* is, at the Surety's option, the sum necessary to meet the cost of fulfilling the terms of a bonded Contract or the penal sum of the bond. In either case, the Loss includes interest (if any), but Loss is reduced by any amounts recovered (through offset or otherwise) by reason of the Principal's defenses or causes of action against the Obligees, and by any amounts recovered from indemnitors and other salvage.

(d) *Loss under an Ancillary Bond* is the amount covered by such bond which is attributable to the Contract for which guaranteed Final Bonds were Executed.

(e) *Loss includes* the following expenses if they are itemized, documented and attributable solely to the Loss under the guaranteed bond:

(1) Amounts actually paid by the Surety which are specifically allocable to the investigation, adjustment, negotiation, compromise, settlement of, or resistance to a claim for Loss resulting from the breach of the terms of the bonded Contract. Any cost allocation method must be reasonable and must comply with generally accepted accounting principles; and

(2) Amounts actually paid by the Surety for court costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred to mitigate any Loss under paragraphs (a) through (e)(1) of this section including suits to obtain sums due from Obligees, indemnitors, Principals and others.

(f) *Loss does not include* the following expenses:

(1) Any unallocated expenses, or any clear mark-up on expenses or any overhead, of the Surety, its attorney, or any other party hired by the Surety or the attorney;

(2) Expenses paid for any suits, cross-claims, or counterclaims filed against the United States of America or any of its agencies, officers, or employees unless the Surety has received, prior to

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filing such suit or claim, written concurrence from SBA that the suit may be filed;

(3) Attorney's fees and court costs incurred by the Surety in a suit by or against SBA or its Administrator;

(4) Fees, costs, or other payments, including tort damages, arising from a successful tort suit or claim by a Principal or any other Person against the Surety; and

(5) Any costs that arise from the Principal's failure to secure and maintain insurance coverage required by the Contract or Order, or any costs that result from any claims or judgments that exceed the amount of any insurance coverage required by the Contract or Order, as well as any costs that arise as a result of any agreement by the Principal in the Contract or Order to indemnify the Oblige or any other Persons.

[61 FR 3271, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 76 FR 2572, Jan. 14, 2011]

§ 115.17 Minimization of Surety's Loss.

(a) *Indemnity agreements and collateral*—(1) *Requirements*. The Surety must take all reasonable action to minimize risk of Loss including, but not limited to, obtaining from each Principal a written indemnity agreement which covers actual Losses under the Contract and Imminent Breach payments under § 115.34(a) or § 115.69. The indemnity agreement must be secured by such collateral as the Surety or SBA finds appropriate. Indemnity agreements from other Persons, secured or unsecured, may also be required by the Surety or SBA.

(2) *Prohibitions*. No indemnity agreement may be obtained from the Surety, its agent or any other representative of the Surety. The Surety must not separately collateralize the portion of its bond which is not guaranteed by SBA.

(b) *Salvage and recovery*—(1) *General*. The Surety must pursue all possible sources of salvage and recovery. Salvage and recovery includes all payments made in settlement of the Surety's claim, even though the Surety has incurred other losses as a result of that Principal which are not reimbursable by SBA.

(2) *SBA's share*. SBA is entitled to its guaranteed percentage of all salvage

and recovery from a defaulted Principal, its guarantors and indemnitors, and any other party, received by the Surety in connection with the guaranteed bond or any other bond issued by the Surety on behalf of the Principal unless such recovery is unquestionably identifiable as related solely to the non-guaranteed bond. The Surety must reimburse or credit SBA (in the same proportion as SBA's share of Loss) within 45 days of receipt of any recovery by the Surety.

(3) *Multiple Sureties*. In any dispute between two or more Sureties concerning recovery under SBA guaranteed bonds, the dispute must first be brought to the attention of OSG for an attempt at mediation and settlement.

[61 FR 3271, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 79 FR 2087, Jan. 13, 2014]

§ 115.18 Refusal to issue further guarantees; suspension and termination of PSB status.

(a) *Improper surety bond guarantee practices*—(1) *Imprudent practices*. SBA may refuse to issue further guarantees to a Prior Approval Surety or may suspend the preferred status of a PSB Surety, by written notice stating all reasons for such decision and the effective date. Reasons for such a decision include, but are not limited to, a determination that the Surety (in its underwriting, its efforts to minimize Loss, its claims or recovery practices, or its documentation related to SBA guaranteed bonds) has failed to adhere to prudent standards or practices, including any standards or practices required by SBA, as compared to those of other Sureties participating in the same SBA Surety Bond Guarantee Program to a comparable degree.

(2) *Regulatory violations, fraud*. Acts of wrongdoing such as fraud, material misrepresentation, breach of the Prior Approval or PSB Agreement, or regulatory violations (as defined in §§ 115.19(d) and 115.19(h)) also constitute sufficient grounds for refusal to issue further guarantees, or in the case of a PSB Surety, termination of preferred status.

(3) *Audit; records*. The failure of a Surety to consent to SBA's audit or to maintain and produce records constitutes grounds for SBA to refuse to